

Message Text

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45

ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 PC-10 USIA-15 DODE-00

AGR-20 INT-08 COME-00 SPM-01 SWF-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00

EB-11 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 IGA-02 EA-11

DRC-01 (ISO) W

----- 098616

R 011715Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1913

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY NAIMEY

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION USUN YEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 190

AFDROUGHT

AF/N FOR AMBASSADOR MURPHY

EO 11652: NA

SUBJECT: SAHEL DROUGHT: MAURITANIA FOOD NEEDS, STORAGE AND
TRANSPORT

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 122 AND 133 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING IS RECAP CURRENT EMERGENCY FOOD, TRANSPORT
AND STORAGE SITUATION IN MAURITANIA, WITH LATEST ESTIMATES
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ON DISASTROUS 1973-74 HARVEST. THOUGH PROGRESS IS BEING

MADE TOWARD RELIEVING ROAD TRANSPORT BOTTLENECKS, GIRM IS STILL FACED WITH SITUATION WHERE COMMERCIAL PURCHASES AND DONOR GRAIN ALLOTMENTS BARELY MEET CURRENT CONSUMPTION NEEDS, LEAVING NO RPT NO EXCESS GRAIN AVAILABLE TO PRESTOCK FOR RAINY SEASON CONSUMPTION IN ISOLATED INTERIOR REGIONS.

GIRM DROUGHT RELIEF COORDINATOR (MINHEALTH) IS RELUCTANT REQUEST DONORS SUPPLY COSTLY EMERGENCY AIRLIFT AGAIN THIS YEAR, BUT IT IS INCREASINGLY OBVIOUS HE WILL BE OBLIGED TO DO JUST THAT UNLESS MORE FOOD RELIEF IS FORTHCOMING BEFORE RAINS DESCEND BEGINNING IN JULY. END SUMMARY.

1. EMERGENCY GRAIN SUPPLIES. ACCORDING TO LATEST WFP/EMBASSY CALCULATIONS, GIRM HAS FIRM PLEDGES TOTALING SOME 42,000 MT GRAIN OUT OF TOTAL 100,000 ESTIMATED EMERGENCY NEEDS. FOLLOWING TABLE GIVES AMOUNTS, SOURCES AND ETAS ABOVE PLEDGES. IN ADDITION, GIRM HAS OPTION ON 10,000 MT MOROCCAN WHEAT, WHICH IT INTENDS TO TAKE UP AS NEEDED. ACCORDING TO MINHEALTH, GOVERNMENT CAN ALSO AFFORD PURCHASE COMMERCIALY ADDITIONAL 10,000 MT CEREALS IF NECESSARY DUE CONTINUING SHOW DONOR RESPONSE.

DONOR	METRIC TONS	ETA
USA	10,000	FEB-MAR
FRG	9,000	MAR-APR
FRANCE	7,000	APR-MAY
FED/EEC	10,000	MAR-APR
CANADA	6,000 (EST.)	UNKNOZNO

NOTE: CANADIAN DONATION, ACCORDING TO WFP REP, CONSISTS OF DOLLARS TWO MILLION FOR PURCHASE HARD WHEAT AND TRANSPORT TO MAURITANIA. WFP ESTIMATES THIS AMOUNT SUFFICIENT CIF APPROXIMATELY 6,000 MT WHEAT AT PREVAILING PRICES.

2. POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL DONATIONS. LOCAL WFP REP BELIEVES FAO/WFP MAY BE WILLING DONATE UP TO 5,000 MT IN CY 1974. DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO NOUAKCHOTT, FAO DIRECTOR BOERMA, HOWEVER, GAVE NO FIRM PLEDGE NEW FOOD AID. WFP REP BELIEVES BOERMA RELUCTANT MAKE NEW DONATIONS BECAUSE HE FEARS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THIS WOULD TRIGGER REQUESTS FROM MALI AND NIGER, TO WHICH FAO UNWILLING RESPOND. PRC AND SOVIETS, WE UNDERSTAND, CONTEMPLATING 1974 DONATIONS EQUAL TO 1973 TRANCHE, I.E. 8,000 AND 3,000 MT RESPECTIVELY. MINHEALTH HAS HAD, HOWEVER, NO SUCCESS IN OBTAINING ETA OR OTHER FIRM COMMITMENT FROM EITHER SOVIET OR CHINESE AMBASSADOR. ARAB STATES, WHICH LAST YEAR CONTRIBUTED MINOR FOOD AID, HAVE SO FAR REMAINED SILENT RE THEIR CY 1974 RELIEF PLANS. FRENCH FAC REPRESENTATIVE

HERE, HOWEVER, ESTIMATES HIS GOVERNMENT COULD COME UP WITH
ADDITIONAL 4,000 MT CEREALS IF GIRM PRESSES.

3. LOCAL CEREAL PRODUCTION. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED,
MAURITANIAN 1973-74 CEREALS CROP EVEN MORE DISASTROUS THAN
IN 1972. MINRURAL DEVELOPMENT AGRICULTURALISTS ESTIMATE
FALL 1973 HARVEST AT ONLY 18 TO 20 THOUSAND TONS MILLET/SORGHUM
AND 2,555 MT RICE--MAINLY FROM HEAVILY MECHANIZED CHINESE-
SUPPORTED ROSSO RICE PLANTATION. FIRM ESTIMATES FOR 1973-74
BOTTOMLAND CEREAL HARVEST NOT YET AVAILABLE, BUT GIRM OFFICIALS
AND UN EXPERTS HERE BELIEVE THAT BOTTOMLAND PRODUCTION WILL
NOT EXCEED 8 TO 10 THOUSAND TONS AT BEST, MINUS TONNAGE
SMUGGLED TO SENEGAL TO EARN HARD CURRENCY CFA FRANCS.
NORMALLY, BOTTOMLAND ACCOUNTS FOR SOME 60 PERCENT TOTAL
DOMESTIC CEREALS PRODUCTION, WHICH IN GOOD YEAR WOULD EQUAL
SOME 100,000 MT, INCLUDING SUBSTANTIAL TONNAGES IMPORTED
FROM BORDERING REGIONS MALI AND SENEGAL IN UNRECORDED TRADE
ACROSS FRONTIERS. THIS YEAR, HOWEVER, RIVERINE FARMERS
PLANTED ONLY AN ESTIMATED 40 PERCENT OF BOTTOMLANDS
AS RESULT ABNORMALLY LOW AND SHORT FLOODING SEASON ALONG
SENEGAL RIVER. UN AGRICULTURALISTS STATIONED AT KAEDI INFORM
US THAT RESULTS FROM EVEN THIS LIMITED PLANTING ARE EXCEPTIONALLY
POOR.

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AFDROUGHT
AF/N FOR AMBASSADOR MURPHY

4. TRANSPORT. TRANSPORT PICTURE CONTINUES MURKY. FED IS PROCEEDING WITH PURCHASE 80 TRUCKS WITH 10- TO 12-TON CAPACITY. BERLIET HEJ PROMISED DELIVERY FIRST 48 TRUCKS BY END MARCH. FAO IS FUNDING PURCHASE SIX TRUCKS OF SIMILAR SIZE ETA MARCH AND APRIL. GIRM'S 160-VEHICLE EMERGENCY FOOD TRANSPORT FLEET CONTINUES BE PLAGUED BY SPARE PARTS SHORTAGE, BUT MINHEALTH HAS HAD SOME SUCCESS IN OBTAINING BADLY NEEDED MERCEDES SPARES THROUGH LEVERAGE EXERTED BY FRG EMBASSY
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HERE. AT SAME TIME, GIRM MOVING AHEAD WITH FIRM ORDERS NEW FUEL TANKERS PROVIDE STEADY GASOLINE-DIESEL OIL SUPPLIES TO PROVINCIAL CAPITALS. FIRST TANKERS UNDER THIS PROGRAM EXPECTED ARRIVE LATER THIS MONTH. GOVERNMENT HAS, HOWEVER, APPARENTLY SHELVED PLAN (REPORTED NOUAKCHOTT 122) PURCHASE ADDITIONAL 80 FLAT-BED TRUCKS USING ITS OWN FUNDS.

5. EMBASSY/AADO HAVE CONTINUED FOLLOW-UP WITH MINHEALTH ON CONSTRUCTION GRAINS STORAGE FACILITIES IN INTERIOR CENTERS TO BE FUNDED UNDER USAID SAHEL R&R PROGRAM (SEE NOUAKCHOTT 133). FED/EEC IS ALSO PRESSING AHEAD ON THEIR PART STORAGE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM. FED STORAGE TEAM ASSIGNED HERE OVER PAST FEW WEEKS HAS STUDIED PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS WITH MINPUBLIC WORKS AND LOCAL CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES. EMBASSY HAS, HOWEVER, HAD NO SUCCESS IN CONVINCING GIRM ACCEPT CONSTRUCTION EMERGENCY GRAIN STORAGE BY REGIONAL GOVERNORS USING LOCAL MATERIALS. AS OUTLINED NOUAKCHOTT 133, MINHEALTH DID APPROACH CABINET COLLERWUES--PRINCIPALLY MINPUBLIC WORKS--WITH OUR IDEA BEGIN CONSTRUCTION SOONEST USING STONE, AND OTHER TRADITIONAL MATERIALS IN ORDER ASSURE STOCKS GRAIN AVAILABLE IN SUCH ISOLATED CENTERS AS NEMA, AIOUN AND SELIBABY DURING RAINY SEASON. AGAIN, HOWEVER, HE REBUFFED BY THOSE WHO HOLD VIEW THAT ANY STORAGE MUST BE OF MODERN, PERMANENT TYPE. IN THIS MINISTER'S OPPONENTS WERE, IN THE END, SUPPORTED BY FED, WHOSE EXPERTS OPTED FOR LEAMANENT CEMENT-STEEL

STRUCTURES DESPITE EMBASSY-WFP EFFORTS PERSUADE THEM OTHERWISE.

WE

HAVE, HOWEVER, SUCCEEDED IN FINDING AT LEAST TWO SETS OF SUITABLE PLANS FOR CEMENT-STEEL HANGERS COSTING FAR LESS THAN ORIGINAL HANGERS PROPOSED BY MINPUBLIC WORKS. IN LIGHT FIRM GIRM OPPOSITION OUR PROPOSALS FOR LOCAL CONSTRUCTION WE ARE PLANNING PROCEED ALONG LINES MODDJQ COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION DESPITE OBVIOUS DELAYS INHERENT IN THIS METHOD.

6. ANY DISCUSSION OF PRESTOCKING GRAIN FOR RAINY SEASON DISTRIBUTION SEEMS, FROM OUR OPTIC, SOMEWHAT THEORETICAL GIVEN KAPWTHAT GIRM CONTINUES RECEIVE FROM FOREIGN DONORS AND COMMERCIAL PURCHASES JUST ENOUGH CEREAL TO MEET CURRENT CONSUMPTION NEEDS. AS NOTED ABOVE, 1973-74 HARVEST CAN MEET ONLY ABOUT 20 PERCENT OF DOMESTIC NEEDS, CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATED BY THE WORLD BANK AT MORE THAN 140,000 MT PER ANNUM. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GIRM ATT MPTS BUY UP ACY EXCESS PRODUCTION DIRECTLY FROM FARMERS HAVE, HOWEVER, BEEN TO NO AVAIL. MINHEALTH, WHO LATE LAST YEAR AUTHORIZED REGIONAL GOVERNORS IN SOUTH TO USE DROUGHT EMERGENCY FUND MONIES FOR THIS PURPOSE, REPORTS TOTAL PURCHASES TO DATE AS ZERO RPT ZERO DESPITE CASH-ON-THE BARREL-HEAD TERMS OFFERED. EVEN MORE DISTRESSING HERE IS APPARENTLY MISLEADING REPORT CARRIED BACK FROM RECENT OUAGADOUGOU DROUGHT MEETINGS BY MINRURAL DEVELOPMENT, WHO HAS TOLD HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES THAT MAURITANIA IS ASSURED OF GETTING MINIMUM 80,000 MT GRAIN DURING 1974. BOTH CHARGE AND WFP REP ARE ATTEMPTING CONVINCE GIRM OFFICIALS THAT NO ADDITIONAL DONATIONS ABOVE 40-42 THOUSAND TON LEVEL ARE YET IN SIGHT ACCORDING OUR BEST CALCULATIONS. MOREOVER, EVEN IF SUCH MASSIVE ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE WERE PLEDGED, QUESTION REMAINS AS TO WHEN GRAIN WOULD ARRIVE HERE, VIZ: BEFORE OR AFTER RAINS. UNLESS GIRM RECEIVES RELATIVELY MASSIVE DELIVERIES BEFORE JUNE 30, THERE IS NO CHANCE THAT IT CAN PRESTOCK SUFFICIENT AMOUNTS FEED POPULATION IN ISOLATED REGIONS DURING RAINY SEASON WHEN THESE AREAS VIRTUALLY CUTOFF FROM OVERLAND ACCESS BY HEAVY VEHICLES.

DECON JUNE 30, 1974.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISASTER RELIEF, TRUCKS, GASOLINE, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, SPARE PARTS, DROUGHTS, HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION, FOOD ASSISTANCE, GRAINS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974NOUAKC00190
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: NOUAKCHOTT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740375/aaaacrje.tel
Line Count: 268
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AID
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: NOUAKCHOTT 122 AND 133 (NOTAL)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAR 2002 by collinp0>; APPROVED <04 JUN 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SAHEL DROUGHT: MAURITANIA FOOD NEEDS, STORAGE AND TRANSPORT
TAGS: EAID, SWEL
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005